

GYTS Country Report

Slovakia, 2003

*Prepared by GYTS Slovakia, 2003, Collaborative Group**

Introduction

Smoking is the most important cause of premature death and loss of health in developed countries. In countries, where smoking has been common, smoking is estimated to cause over 90% of lung cancer in men and about 70% of lung cancer among women. In addition, in these countries, the attributable fractions are 56-80% for chronic respiratory diseases and 22% for cardiovascular disease. Worldwide, it is estimated that tobacco causes almost 9% of all deaths (20). In European region one half of all people who regularly smoke die from tobacco-related diseases, half in middle age and half in old age. Situation in former communist European countries is particularly urgent. Middle-aged men here are in two times higher risk of death from tobacco-related disease than men in Western Europe. It is predicted that, unless effective measures are implemented, tobacco products will be responsible for 2 million deaths each year by 2020 (8, 21).

In Slovakia, according to the latest survey from 2002, 30.1 % of men and 17.0 % of women regularly smoke (7). Previous surveys, carried out within last 10 years, showed increase of smoking among women. Among university medical students in Slovakia, the most apparent change during the period 1995-1999 was the dramatic increase in occasional smoking among women. This finding reflects progressively increasing social tolerance of women' smoking, representing a potential public health problem deserving attention in our preventive measures (1, 2).

Another specific feature of the Slovak population is a high level of heterogeneity in overall mortality in its regions and districts. This may be caused by several reasons. Some of the most likely ones include different educational structure and various cultural and ethnic influences (4, 14). In designing of population surveys, the heterogeneity should be taken into account and in preventive measures specifically tailored strategies should be used in each region.

Tobacco control legislation in Slovakia

Tobacco use in Slovakia is regulated by several legislation norms. Among them, the most important are:

The Act No. 67/1997 Coll. on Protection of Non-smokers (§6, par. 1) regulates the sale of tobacco products. According to this norm, tobacco products are forbidden to be sold in specialised groceries and shops with goods determined to children and youth; in all types of health service facilities, school facilities, schools and social care facilities for children and youth; in automatic machines and collected on delivery; and in a package of less than 10 pieces.

The Act No. 147/2001 of April 2 on Advertising and on Amending and Supplementing prohibits the advertising of tobacco products by § 6 par. 1 on all types of information carriers; through free distribution of tobacco products samples to the public; and on advertising items, which are not related to smoking and are distributed to the public, with the exception of advertising issues, which are distributed at points of sale.

The Act No. 308/2000 on Transmission and Retransmission regulates the tobacco products advertisement in TV within the transmission under the Section 33, letter 1: The transmission of all forms of advertisement and teleshopping for tobacco products is forbidden. Evading this ban by means of the use of brand names, trademarks, emblems or other clear signs of such products in the broadcasting time selected for advertisement and teleshopping is forbidden.

As for sponsoring, the Slovak legislation currently does not specifically regulate the issue of sponsoring directly by the law.

**See end of the report for details of GYTS Slovakia, 2003, Collaborative Group*